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## The effects of teachers' attitudes on students' personality and performance

Mucella Ulug<sup>a\*</sup>, Melis Seray Ozden<sup>b</sup>, Ahu Eryilmaz<sup>c</sup><sup>a, b</sup> *Istanbul Kultur University, Department of Psychology, Istanbul, 34156, Turkey*<sup>c</sup> *Maltepe University, Department of Psychology, Istanbul, 34857, Turkey*

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### Abstract

The emphasize of student centered educational topics is usually on the effect of teachers' attitudes on students' academical success with a lack of lifespan developmental perspective. A teacher with his teaching methods and furthermore with his attitudes and behaviours, provides his students to gain a mentally healthy personality and to have a new clear world view by leaving unforgettable traces on them. This is a preparatory study to uncover how attitudes of teachers affect the personalities and performances of students. In this sense this study will provide an emic understanding of education and the dynamics of relationship between teachers and students beyond the limited areas of classes and courses. Sample group of research consists of totally 353 students from different departments of Istanbul Kultur University and Maltepe University. By giving a questionnaire the students were asked to give samples of their primary school, secondary school, high school and university teachers' positive and negative attitudes and behaviours as well as to tell how it effects their personality development and performances by giving samples. The most important findings of the research evidenced that teachers' positive attitudes have positively influence students' personality as well as their life performances. Based on these findings teachers' role in lifespan education as beyond a simple knowledge transformation is discussed.

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**Keywords:** Teachers' attitudes; students' personality; students' performance.

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### 1. Introduction

The Science of Education is an area of expertise formed on the basis of two notions, "education" and "instruction" (Karsli, 2007). Education is the activity that aids new generations obtain the necessary information, ability, attitude and understanding and develop their character while preparing them for communal life (Karsli, 2007: 9). Teaching, on the other hand, is the process in which the individual develops talents (obtained during the education phase) in proportion to their capacity (Karsli, 2007: 17). The most important factor in education and teaching activities is the teacher. A teacher, in the most general terms, is a person working in educational institutes who enables students to reach cognitive, sensory and behavioral aim and gains within the range determined by the educational system (Gundogdu, Silman, 2007: 259).

In our day a modern teacher surpasses this definition as well. The teacher has gone beyond just teaching class, giving lectures, making exams and giving grades; the teacher also takes on the roles of organizing, managing, counselling, observing and evaluating. The teacher also has an important role in influencing the society, creating a sound foundation towards the future of society and ensuring the continuation of such actions (Temel, 1988: 21).

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\* Mucella Ulug, Tel.: +0-212-498-4547; fax: +0-212-465-8310

E-mail address: [mulug@iku.edu.tr](mailto:mulug@iku.edu.tr)

After the family, school is the first basic socialization institution for the child. Apart from the parents, it's the student's teacher who is effectively in the front seat in regards to his/her personality development and both academic and social performance. The understanding of modern education in our day lays the duty and responsibility of being effective in not just the child's intellectual development but also character development solely on the shoulders of the teacher. The fulfilment of this responsibility is only possible through the teacher's being able to develop healthy personality values themselves as well as providing efficiency in their relationships with students so as to allow them to develop their personality freely (Can, 2011; Inelmen, 2011).

The abilities and characteristics that are necessary in order to be a good teacher are also the same factors that define a good education. A good teacher has eight basic characteristics, which are; Knowledge of material; Decision making; Critical thought and problem solving ability; Self understanding and self correction; Reflecting; Recognizing students and knowing students learning needs; Applying new finding in education; Teaching and communication ability.

We can gather these properties under two headings (Ari, 2008: 5 - 6). The teacher who thinks critically and the self-governing teacher. A teacher who realizes that the nature of knowledge and abilities directly affects his/her students and surroundings takes responsibility for his/her own knowledge and abilities, creates positive relationships with his/her students and can relay these to students in the most efficient manner (Ari, 2008: 5 - 6).

In this whole process, the effect of the teacher in the personality development and success of students is a fact that can not be overlooked. The teacher, through either positive or negative attitude in communication with students and in how he/she reflects this, directs the shape of their lives, has a positive or negative effect on the attitude shown toward themselves or the public in general, affecting development of the ability to communicate, research and be creative (Ataunal, 2003). The behavior and approach of the teacher is directly accepted and copied by students, which puts great responsibilities on the teachers. Studies performed in the current day clearly show the effect on students of mutual interaction in teacher-student relationships, teachers approach regarding students and especially the perception of this by students.

For a teacher, being able to interact with the student and display positive behavior such as asking questions, understanding their thoughts, showing interest and appreciation increases the students' motivation and success. While working towards providing students at a certain development level information, experience and behavior on a certain topic, teachers become role models for students by way of their own behavior and attitude. Positive attitudes lead to success while negative attitudes lead to failure and as a result success can lead to positive ego attitudes while failure leads to negative ego attitudes. For example, if the teacher engages in belittling comments towards a student due to his/her failure, the negative effects of this will be inevitable (Gecer, 2002).

In Frymier's (1993) study concerning the effect of positive teacher behavior on the student's motivation level, the author has concentrated on certain behaviors for teachers such as giving feedback for student works, complimenting, wanting to listen to students and being interested. The results of the study show that teachers' non-verbal actions such as smiling, having a relaxed stance, various gestures and facial expressions come first in improving the learning experience for students whereas the topic of the class itself comes in second.

The student's performance is not completely the result of their work; performance is affected by many factors and the first one is the attitude of the teacher. A positive attitude from the teacher affects the student's motivation, attitude towards school and school work, the student's self confidence and as a result personality development.

Teaching is much more than saying and explaining (Gundogdu, Silman, 2007: 264). One of the most basic principles of teaching abilities is supporting of the student by the teacher and for the teacher to put for their positive expectations in order to motivate the student to learn (Yavuzer, 2000). While the positive behavior of the teacher allows him/her to create a positive relationship with students, it also allows for the teacher to dwell on the positive behavior of students as opposed to the negative, taking on a reinforcing role as well (Yavuzer, 2000).

In the education system, a condition of being a good educator is knowing the communication process well. The teacher who tries to understand students' emotions such as interest, fear, and worry, supports students' social activities, appreciates, approves of and compliments them for activities he/she finds of value will make the students feel that they are being thought of, loved and aided, and that the teacher is working for their good. Students of such a teacher will, taking the teacher as a role model, in turn be considerate of others, running to the aid of others, maintaining good relations and positive attitudes (Basaran, 1994).

In this research, it is expected that students whose teachers displayed positive attitude and behavior will state that these in turn had a positive effect on their character development and success while negative attitude and behavior by teachers had a negative effect on their character development and success.

### 1.1. Sample group

The sample group for this research includes 353 students from various departments of Istanbul Kultur University and Maltepe University. Of the complete sample group, 56.45% are female and 43.6% are male.

### 1.2. Instrumentation

In this research qualitative data has been collected about the effects of positive and negative attitudes and behaviours of teachers on the personality development and performance of students. For this purpose 353 university students were chosen randomly and asked questions about the attitude and behavior of their teachers during primary school, middle school, high school and university and how these affected their personality development and success. The students were also asked to explain with examples.

## 2. Analysis and findings

The participants' expressions were subjected to meta analysis. The findings and results of the research are presented in tables and graphics in order to provide visual ease.

Participants generally describe teachers' positive attitude as compassionate, understanding, helpful, seeing the student as an individual, being friendly and interested, communicating, being genuine and tolerant, supporting, motivating and encouraging participation in social events. Teachers' negative attitude is listed as discrediting, vengeful, too disciplined, uninterested, favoritism, being angry, not caring, being intolerant, not understanding and being inconsistent.

When considering the effect of the teacher's positive attitude on performance of the student, positive attitude by the teacher can improve student success as can be seen in the graphic below (Fig. 1). According to responses from participants, 91.2% believed a positive attitude increased performance, 0.9% believed it lowered success while 7.9% felt it had no effect on performance.

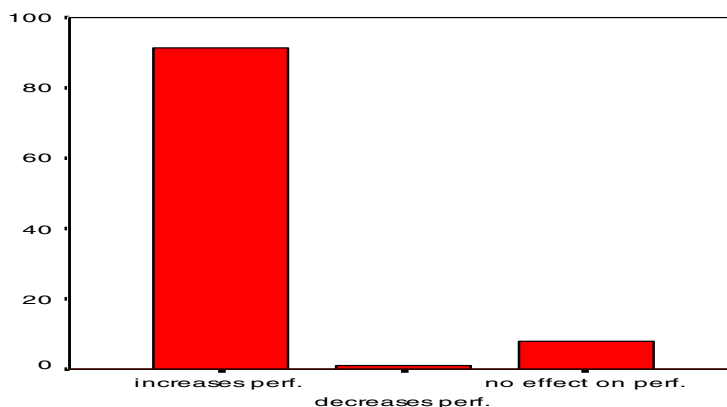


Figure 1. The effects of teachers' positive attitude on students' performance

When considering the effect of the teacher's positive attitude on the student's personality development, we can see that a positive attitude has a positive effect on the personality development of the student as is clearly seen in the graphic below (Fig. 2). According to answers received from participants, 88.3% believed a positive attitude had positive effect on personality development, 11.5% felt it had no effect at all and 0.3% stated that it had a negative effect on personality development.

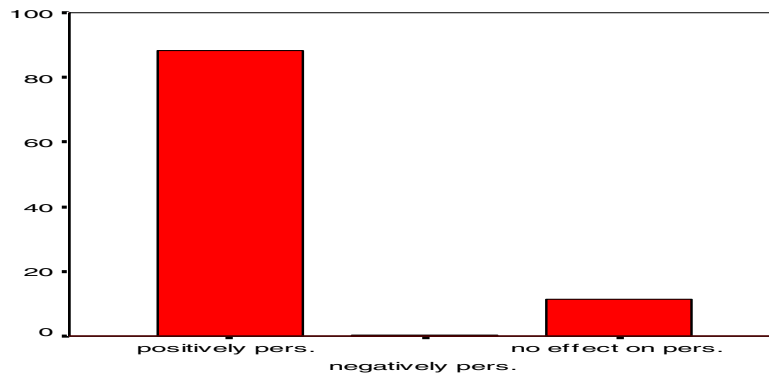


Figure 2. The effects of teachers' positive attitude on students' personality

When considering the effect of negative attitude of teachers on the success of students, it can be seen in the graphic below that the negative attitude of the teacher has a positive effect on the performance of the student (Fig. 3). Of the participants of the survey 75.4% stated that it lowered performance, 18.1% stated that it had no effect on performance and 6.5% stated that negative attitude improved performance,

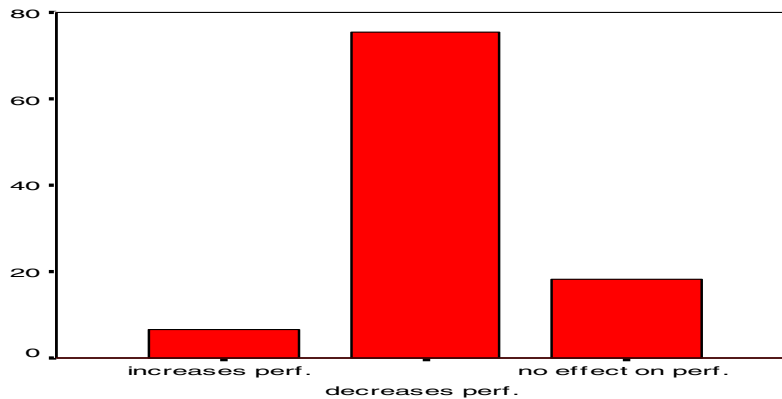


Figure 3. The effects of teachers' negative attitude on students' performance

Considering the effect of the teacher's negative attitude on the student's personality development, it is evident that a negative attitude on the part of the teacher has a negative effect on the personality development of the student as can be seen in the graph below (Fig. 4). 80.5% of participants felt that negative attitude had a negative effect, while 9.9% stated negative attitude had a positive effect on personality development and 9.6% believed it had no effect at all.

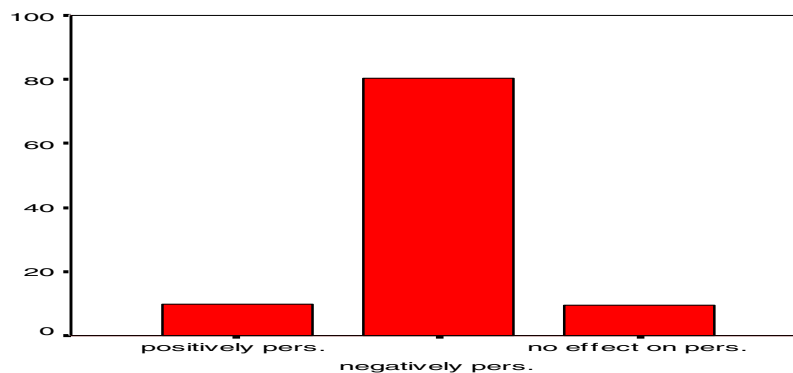


Figure 4. The effects of teachers' negative attitude on students' personality

Inspecting the Table 1 below, it can be seen that students' accounts of their primary school, middle school, high school and university periods reflect that the effect of the teacher's positive attitude on performance is evident.

Table 1. The effects of teachers' attitudes on students' personality and performance (%)

	Positive effect on Performance			Negative effect on Performance			Positive effect on Personality			Negative effect on Personality		
	+	-	none	+	-	none	+	-	none	+	-	none
Primary school	86	0,02	0,12	12.5	69.5	0,18	85.5	0	14.5	0,07	0,8	0,13
Secondary school	89.5	1.5	0,09	0,09	0,77	0,14	0,85	0	0,15	8.5	91.5	0
High school	96.5	0	3.5	2.5	79.5	0,18	0,9	0	0,1	0,06	86.5	7.5
University	93	0	0,07	0,02	75.5	22.5	92.5	0,01	6.5	0,18	0,64	0,18

### 3. Results and discussion

The study findings show that while teachers' positive attitudes have positive effects on students' performance and personality developments, negative attitudes have a negative effect on both the performance levels and personality development of students. This in turn clearly shows that especially teachers surpass the boundaries of the classroom in individuals' educational lives and its evident how effective they can be during the whole life of the student. Teachers are the second-highest determining factor in the development of individuals, after the parents. It must not be forgotten that children take on role models while learning and that is why perhaps the behavior and attitude of teachers, which they spend the most time with apart from their parents, has an effect on their personality development and thus whether they will be successful or not. Teachers being good role models should precede classes because their views on life and behavior guide the student. In short, when education understanding in mentioned, education which gives the child confidence, questions him/her and gives him/her responsibility should come to mind.

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